

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Yankton School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: October 6, 2005

Date of Report: November 9, 2005

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources used:

B – District Instructional Staff Information

C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
D – Statewide Assessment Information
E – Enrollment Information
F – Placement Alternatives
G – Disabling Conditions
H – Exiting Information

1. Student progress data
2. Surveys
3. Private school information
4. Local Education Association (LEA) flow through funds request information
5. Information on home school students
6. Comprehensive plan
7. Comprehensive system of personnel development plan
8. District annual needs assessment
9. Teacher Assistance Team (TAT): referral vs. non referral information
10. Needs assessment information (such as personnel, facilities, etc)
11. Personnel training
12. Budget information
Screening

Meets Requirements

The steering committee reports the district's child find activities are implemented annually. Teacher Assistant Team meeting are held. Yankton has a data driven staff development process. Special education staff analysis of student performance on assessments is one piece of data utilized in the staff development planning. Yankton School District utilizes the services of its own school psychologists, speech pathologists, counselors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, a social worker, and special education instructors. The district does have an interagency agreement with the local Head Start agency. Yankton School District consults with representatives of private schools regarding: which children will receive services, what services will be provided, how and where the services will be provided, and how the services will be evaluated.

Promising Practice:

Child study teams, comprised of several disciplines including the general education teacher, meet at a regularly scheduled time to discuss strategies and techniques for improving instruction.

All personnel, including special education instructors, have the same right to staff development funds that are not special education specific funds as any other instructor. Teachers apply for funding to attend workshops or conferences of their choosing.

Validation Results

Promising practice:

Through observations and interviews the monitoring team identified the following as promising practices: Child study teams were considered a promising practice by the monitoring team. The teams are comprised of several disciplines including the general education teacher, they meet at a regularly scheduled time to discuss strategies and techniques for improving instruction.

JFK program which is a before and after school program for students through the middle school. This is collaboration between the community and the school. The program services students with high needs as well as regular education students.

Boys Town Training program is implemented to a high level in grades k-8. Teachers are all trained and students have one area a week to work on the program.

Kids Hope

Discourse, reading recovery are programs used in the district to enhance education for all students.

Good Character shines through at all three elementary schools.

SED room at Beadle elementary that transfers students in need of behavior modifications to the middle school.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Supervision as meeting the requirements.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

- B – District Instructional Staff Information
- C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- E – Enrollment Information
- F – Placement Alternatives
- K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- L – Complaints
- M – Hearings
- N – Monitoring
- 1. Numbers of children screened
- 2. Preschool age
- 3. School-age
- 4. Age at referral
- 5. Student progress data
- 6. Personnel development information
- 7. Number of referrals that do not result in evaluation
- 8. District records of release to outside agencies
- 9. Needs assessment information
- 10. Personnel training

Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported the provision of a free appropriate public education for all children.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle Two, Free Appropriate Public Education as meeting the requirements.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

G – Disabling Conditions

H-Exiting Information

I – Placement by Age

J – Placement by Disabling Condition

L – Complaints

M – Hearings

N – Monitoring

1. Teacher file reviews
 - Prior notice
 - Telephone log
 - Evaluation report
2. Exit and re-entry into special education
3. Number of placement committee overrides
4. Surveys
5. General curriculum information
6. Comprehensive plan
7. Initial referral log
8. Needs assessment information
9. Personnel training
10. Budget information
11. List of tests currently used in the district (date of publication)
12. List of out of district testing services used by the district
13. List of languages represented in the district (includes sign language and Braille)

14. List of interpreters/signers used in the district
15. Personnel with designated certification

Promising Practice

General educators are evaluators. They write an evaluation summary, outlining the student's RTI.

The multi-disciplinary evaluation in Yankton School District #63-3 includes all areas not just dual modality evaluations.

Meets Requirement

The steering committee concluded the district uses a team of people including the referring person, special education teacher, school psychologist and administrator to determine areas to be evaluated. A multidisciplinary team report is developed for all students with learning disabilities. Parents receive copies of test results. Those results are explained to the parents and are used to develop the individual education program (IEP).

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The monitoring team was not able to validate the promising practices as identified by the steering committee.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring agrees that the district uses a team of people including the referring person, special education teacher, school psychologist and administrator to determine areas to be evaluated. A multidisciplinary team report is developed for all students with learning disabilities. Parents receive copies of test results. Those results are explained to the parents and are used to develop the individual education program (IEP).

Needs Improvement

Six out of twenty files reviewed at the high school had no parent input into the evaluation planning process.

Functional evaluations were not found in 12 files. Some of the functional evaluations were not skill specific for planning purposes. The district has a functional evaluation checklist which if used would meet the criteria for functional assessment and give the team valuable programming information for students.

Out of compliance

24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures. School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

(1) Tests and other evaluation materials are provided and administered in the child's native language or by another mode of communication that the child understands, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. Any standardized tests that are given to a child:

- (a) Have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used; and
- (b) Are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel in conformance with the instructions provided by their producer;

(8) The evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified;

Through file reviews and interviews the monitoring team identified three students that had not had a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility. One student qualified for SED, and had no BASC Scores to verify the disability.

One autistic student had no eligibility shown in the last six years.

One autistic student had listed IQ, Speech/Language and Discrete trials on the permission to evaluate.

There was no evidence any of these evaluations were completed.

Through interviews and file reviews six files were shown to have the BASC given by a school counselor. The teachers interviewed stated most BASC's are given by the counselor. This is a level three interpretation the requirements for analyzing data is a Dr. in Psychology or a school psychologist. At the high school 9 out of 20 files did not complete the evaluations listed on the prior notice, nor did evaluations not listed on the prior notice. Five files had no permission for transition evaluations and they were completed. Two files marked behavior, but did an adaptive behavior without permission. Two files listed personality, behavior/social, visual perceptual/motor and they were not all completed.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

L – Complaints

M – Hearings

1. Teacher file reviews
2. Surveys
3. Comprehensive plan
4. Parental rights document
5. Consent and prior notice forms
6. Needs assessment information
7. Public awareness information
8. Family Education Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) disclosure
9. Review of access logs
10. Personnel training
11. Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee stated parents were provided with the parent rights booklet in accordance with regulation and district policy 100% of the time. The steering committee noted parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought and a surrogate parent is appointed if no parent can be identified.

Parents of children in need of special education and related services are afforded the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through the review of data tables and staff interviews, the monitoring team found the district has not had a due process hearing within the last six years. The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Out of Compliance

ARSD 24:05:30:05. Content of notice. The notice must include the following:

- (2) A description of each evaluation procedure, test, record, or report that the district uses as a basis for the proposal or refusal;

Through file reviews and interviews the monitoring team found 2 files that only had signatures of the parents, but no evaluations were listed. One file had no prior notice.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information

L – Complaints

M – Hearings

N – Monitoring

1. Comprehensive plan
2. Teacher file reviews
3. Student progress data
4. Personnel development information
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training
7. Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee reports policies and procedures are in place to ensure an IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student. Regular education teachers attend all meetings. Present levels of

performance contain specific skills in the student's strengths, weakness and the student's involvement in the general curriculum. Goals are linked to present levels of performance in 34 of 34 files.

Out of compliance

The steering team concluded that 0 of 10 files reviewed, transition evaluation was conducted to gather information regarding the student's interests.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with areas identified as meeting the requirements for the development of an IEP as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement.

Through interviews and file reviews it was identified that progress reporting is not always completed on the goals at the high school. Progress is reported with grades in classes.

When stating on the IEP how a student will be evaluated by grades, or pass fail you must be specific. Some files stated either grades or pass/fail.

Out of compliance

24:05:27:13:02 Transition services

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The monitoring team determined transition did not contain a set of coordinated set of activities for Students that promotes movement from school to post school activities. Seven students did not have employment addressed correctly. For example, "her parents would like her to work independently in the job of her choice in the future." "___ will work in a job/career that suits his interests and abilities." Four students only listed required credits for graduation and had no course of study. One student listed only 9th grade courses. The statement of needed transition services, required by age 16 or younger if appropriate was not addressed in all five areas in four files reviewed.

24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program. Each student's individualized education program shall include:

(2) A statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to:

(a) Meeting the student's needs that result from the student's disability to enable the student to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and

(b) Meeting each of the student's other educational needs that result from the student's disability;

Ten out of twenty files reviewed at the high school did not have measurable annual goals. For example; “Will write effectively for different audiences and specific purposes with 80% competency over the next 36 school weeks.” “When given a written language assignment, __ will use appropriate mechanics, usage and conventions of language with 80% accuracy per quarter. S G211.” “Will use various strategies and techniques to improve her writing quality.” “Will speak effectively in a variety of formal and informal situations. “ Five files in other schools did not link the goals to the present levels of performance.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data Sources Used:

B – Instructional Staff Information
E – Enrollment Information
F – Placement Alternatives
G – Disabling Conditions
I – Placement by Age
J – Placement by Disabling Condition
L – Complaints
M – Hearings
N – Monitoring

1. File reviews
2. Parent, Student, General educator surveys
3. General curriculum information
4. Age at Placement
5. Needs assessment information
6. Personnel training
7. Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the school district provides procedures for determining placement options using the continuum of alternative placements. LRE considerations are applied to all students’ birth through twenty one.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under least restrictive environment.